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Religious Life




Sr. Rani Punnaserril, a member of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, with food packages for migrant workers (Provided photo)



by Michele Morek

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Writing this end-of-the-year blog is difficult, but delightful. How do I summarize a whole year of great columns?

And what a year it was.

The columns section of Global Sisters Report is the place where sisters and associates tell their own stories. They write about everything and anything. So many columns came in this year that we increased the number we ran each week; even now, there is still a two-month wait for the columns to be posted. Not that we are complaining! We are thrilled to have so many sisters who want to write for us. We salute you all, faithful regulars and new writers.

My only regret is that I could not mention all of you in this summary. I just had to look for major themes, new parts of the world, or special treats.

Often, sisters just reflect on "ordinary" aspects of religious life, like getting up in the morning, the breviary or their community constitutions. In fact, we have a special panel of sisters that write on the life of religious sisters. This year, we said goodbye to the third panel of writers and welcomed a new panel.




Sr. Vivien Echekwubelu, registered nurse and member of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, in her protective gear on shift at a hospital in Baltimore, Maryland (Provided photo)

I don't have to tell you that the major theme of the year was COVID-19. Sisters reflected on the pandemic from all angles: a sister doctor, a sister nurse and several teachers wrote; another sister described her unique experience of COVID-19 as " novitiate," and one told us about coping with the disease herself. We had a whole department of sisters reporting on the plight of refugees in India; there are too many to list, but examples are here, here and here.

Sr. Nancy Sylvester set a GSR record for her March 23 column, "What did you learn from the coronavirus pandemic?" By Dec. 15, it had a total of 67,905 pageviews. It is the most-read story of any kind in the history of Global Sisters Report!

GSR did a special series on homelessness this year, and several sisters contributed columns to that theme here, here and here.

Really, our sisters keep us up on events all around the globe. Wildfires in Australia, a mass shooting in a U.S. city, weavers in Mexico, Irish relationships with Choctaw Nation, the Black Lives Matter awakening in the United States: Our sisters are top of it.

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An osprey is seen against the smoke-filled sky at sunrise near Kingscliff, New South Wales, Australia. (Bryan Ricketts)

From the Amazon basin to Cambodia and the Cook Islands, from Appalachia to Zimbabwe, our sisters really put the "global" in Global Sisters Report. This year, we met aboriginal people and the Dalits and the Masai. We met the first African sister in a white community and a sister who donated a kidney to another sister.

Our writers are good about keeping us in touch with feast days or the liturgical season. They got us ready for the Annunciation, Lent, Holy Thursday, the Ascension and everything before, after or in between. We got a study guide on *Fratelli Tutti*, and we took a pilgrimage to El Salvador for the 40th anniversary of the deaths of the four churchwomen.

We played in an orchestra, learned how to use musicals to deal with the pandemic and meditated on works of art. Really! I could not make this stuff up. This is like attending a liberal arts college.

We hope Global Sisters Report gave you something to like about 2020, and we look forward to seeing what it brings in 2021.

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